



ZOOM

in on america

ELECTIONS 2004



■ Democratic Presidential Candidate
John F. Kerry

John Kerry graduated in 1966 from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and joined the U.S. Navy. He served in Vietnam from 1968-1969. After receiving a law degree from Boston College in 1976 he worked as an assistant district attorney and opened his own law practice. In 1982 he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts and in 1984 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he is currently serving his fourth consecutive term. He is on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Kerry is married to the former Teresa Heinz, widow of Senator John Heinz from Pennsylvania. He has two daughters and she has three sons.

Richard B. Cheney

George W. Bush

Sworn into office on January 20, 2001, as the 43rd president, George W. Bush is the second son of a president to also serve in that office. John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams, was the first. Bush grew up in Texas and received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1968. After college, he joined the Texas Air National Guard. He received an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1975. After graduating, he returned to Texas and began a career in the energy business. With a group of other investors he purchased the Texas Rangers baseball franchise in 1989 and served as general managing partner. In 1994 he was elected governor of Texas, a position he held for six years. President Bush and his wife Laura have twin daughters.

■ Republican Presidential Candidate

John R. Edwards

To run for president of the United States the candidate must:

- ➔ Be a natural-born citizen of the United States
 - ➔ Be at least 35 years of age, and
 - ➔ Be a resident of the United States for at least 14 years.
- U.S. Constitution, Article 2, section 2, paragraph 5

Step 1: Primaries and Caucuses

There are many people who would like to become President. Each of these people have their own ideas about how our government should work. Some of these people can belong to the same political party. That's where primaries and caucuses come in.

In these elections, party members get to vote for the candidate that will represent their party in the upcoming general election.

Step 2: National Conventions

At the end of the primaries and caucuses, each party holds a national convention to finalize the selection of one Presidential nominee. During this time, each Presidential candidate chooses a running-mate (or Vice-Presidential candidate).

Step 3: The General (or Popular) Election

Now that each party is represented by one candidate, the general election process begins. Candidates campaign throughout the country in an attempt to win the support of voters. Finally in November, the people vote for one candidate.

When a person casts a vote in the general election, they are not voting directly for an individual Presidential candidate. Instead, voters in each state actually cast their vote for a group of people, known as electors. These electors are part of the Electoral College and are supposed to vote for their state's preferred candidate.

Step 4: The Electoral College

In the Electoral College system, each state gets a certain number of electors, based on each state's total number of representation in Congress. Each elector gets one electoral vote. All together, there are 538 Electoral votes.

In December (following the general election), the electors cast their votes. When the votes are counted on January 6th, the Presidential candidate that gets more than half (270) wins the election. The President-elect and Vice President-elect take the oath of office and are inaugurated two weeks later, on January 20th.

Source: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/election/president.html>

Third Party

Despite the dominance of the Republican and Democratic parties, third parties often affect the outcome of U.S. elections. Ralph Nader is the only third party candidate in 2004 that might have a measurable impact.

Source: http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/elections/candidates_and_parties.html



American astronaut Leroy Chiao. (AP)

FUN FACTS

American Astronaut Will Vote From Space on Election Day

Texas lawmakers passed 1997 bill to let astronauts vote from space

Floating around the Earth 360 kilometers up, NASA Astronaut Leroy Chiao is not too far from the polls to vote on Election Day. Chiao, who is a few days into a six-month mission as commander of the 10th crew of the International Space Station, will cast his vote by secure e-mail in the Nov. 2 national election.

Two-Party System

Two-party competition stands out as one of the American political system's most famous features. Since the 1860s, the Republicans and Democrats have dominated electoral politics.

To read more: <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/election04/parties.htm>



- **The Republican Party** (often GOP for Grand Old Party) is one of the two major political parties in the United States. The current President of the United States, George W. Bush, is a member of the party – and by rules common to both major U.S. parties, its head – and it has majorities in the Senate and the House. The GOP is a conservative (or right-wing) party, and it has numerous internal factions.

The party was organized in Ripon, Wisconsin on February 28, 1854, as a party opposed to the westward expansion of slavery. It is not to be confused with the Democratic-Republican party of Thomas Jefferson or the National Republican Party of Henry Clay. Since its inception, its chief opposition has been the Democratic Party.



- **The Democratic Party** is one of the two major United States political parties. The party is currently the minority in both the Senate and the House.

Its origins lie in the original Republican Party founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1794 (today, this party is usually referred to as the "Democratic-Republican Party" for the sake of convenience; but such usage is anachronistic). After the disintegration of the Federalist party, the Republicans were the only major party in American politics. The presidency of Andrew Jackson, however, destroyed the unity of the party, with the Jacksonians forming the Democratic-Republican faction, opposed by the National Republicans, led by John Quincy Adams. The Jacksonian "Democratic-Republicans" soon became known as simply "Democrats". From 1833 to 1856, the Democratic party was opposed chiefly by the Whig Party. From 1856 onward its main opposition has come from the modern Republican Party.

Source: <http://www.wordiq.com>

The Electoral College was created by the framers of the U.S. Constitution as an alternative to electing the president by popular vote or by Congress. Each state elects the number of representatives to the Electoral College that is equal to its number of Senators—two from each state—plus its number of delegates in the House of Representatives. The District of Columbia, which has no voting representation in Congress, has three Electoral College votes. There are currently 538 electors in the Electoral College; 270 votes are needed to win the presidential election.

Several weeks after the general election, electors from each state meet in their state



Source: e-journal: Elections Guide 2004 (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

capitals and cast their

official vote for president and vice president. The votes are then sent to the president of the U.S. Senate who, on January 6 with the entire Congress present, tallies the votes and announces the winner.

The winner of the Electoral College vote usually is the candidate who has won the popular vote. However, it is possible to win the presidency without winning the popular vote. The most recent case occurred in the 2000 presidential election when President Bush won the Electoral College vote—271 to 266—after losing the popular vote to then Vice President Al Gore. Two other presidents—Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 and Benjamin Harrison in 1888—became president without winning the popular vote. In the 1824 election between John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, Jackson won the popular vote but neither won a majority of Electoral College votes. Adams secured the presidency only after the election was decided by vote of the House of Representatives, a procedure provided for in the Constitution when no candidate wins a majority of the Electoral College.

Source: e-journal: Elections Guide 2004

When is a general election held?

It is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November in even-numbered years.

There are currently 24 states, totaling 208 electoral votes, in the likely and solid columns for President George Bush. They are: Alabama (9), Alaska (3), Arizona (10), Arkansas (6), Georgia (15), Idaho (4), Indiana (11), Kansas (6), Kentucky (8), Louisiana (9), Mississippi (6), Missouri (11), Montana (3), Nebraska (5), North Carolina (15), North Dakota (3), Oklahoma (7),

South Carolina (8), South Dakota (3), Tennessee (11), Texas (34), Virginia (13), Utah (5), and Wyoming (3).

There are 13 states either likely or certainly going

to Senator John Kerry, with a total of 179 electoral votes. They are: California (55), Connecticut (7), the District of Columbia (3), Delaware (3), Hawaii (4), Illinois (21), Maryland (10), Massachusetts (12), New Jersey (15), New York (31), Rhode Island (4), Vermont (3), and Washington (11).

There are currently three states that lean toward Kerry and have a total of 28 electoral votes: Maine (4), Michigan (17), and Oregon (7).

Of the 50 states and the District of Columbia voting on November 2, there are currently 11 states, with 123 electoral votes, that are too close to call. They are: Colorado (9), Florida (27), Iowa (7), Minnesota (10), Nevada (5), New Hampshire (4), New Mexico (5), Ohio (20), Pennsylvania (21), West Virginia (5), and Wisconsin (10). A candidate must have a total of 270 votes to win the Electoral College and, thus, the election.

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Activity Page

Win a Book!

To take part in a drawing for one of three English-language books find the answer to the following question:
What does the GOP stand for?

Send your answer to:
zoom@usinfo.pl

Give your name, address, and age. The deadline is November 30.

Good Luck!

The winners from the previous issue will soon receive their prizes by mail.

■ Fill in the Blank

President, Candidate, Ballot Box, Ballot, Democracy, Independent, Poll, Voters, Election

1. The _____ is a sealed container into which an elector places a completed ballot paper.
2. An _____ is a voting process by which a choice is made between candidates in an election or between options in a referendum. Also, can be described by the choosing of representatives by voters.
3. Another name for the vote itself is called _____.
4. A system of government in which governance of the people is by elected representatives is called _____.
5. An _____ candidate or Member of Parliament can be described as not a member of a political party.
6. Another word for an election is a _____.
7. Those people who vote in an election are called _____.
8. A person who seeks or is nominated for an office, prize, or honor is known as a _____.
9. The _____ is the chief executive of the United States, serving as both chief political executive.

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Glossary

Caucus—a meeting, in particular a meeting of people whose goal is political or organizational

Front-runner—a candidate in any election or nomination process who is considered to be the most popular or likely to win

Midterm election—an election for seats in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives that occurs during a presidential term of office

■ Cool Web Sites

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov>

Kids Voting USA: <http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/>

PBS: The Democracy Project: <http://pbskids.org/democracy/vote/>

What Kids Can Do: <http://www.whatkidscando.org/Wire/Wire.asp?SearchCase+FindId&WireId=406>

Election Information: <http://www.usinfo.pl/elections/>

MTV's Rock the Vote: <http://www.rockthevote.com>